

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2965

AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 1731

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, PINT, GE, GW, WB

SUBJECT: GDR BUSS STOPPAGE

REF: A)USBERLIN 1691

B) USBERLIN 1703

SUMMARY: FROM A TOTAL OF 20 BUSES WHICH SET OUT TO CARRY  
CDU YOUTHS TO BERLIN FOR AUGUST 13 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES COM-  
MEMORATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF BUILDING THE WALL ONLY  
8 BUSES REACHED THEIR DESTINATION. AT THE MARIENBORN  
CHECKPOINT GDR BORDER AUTHORITES QUESTIONED PASSENGERS AND  
DRIVERS ABOUT THEIR REASONS FOR TRAVELLING TO BERLIN. GDR  
POLICE STATIONED ALONG THE HELMSTEDT-BERLIN AUTOBAHN CARE-  
FULLY OBSERVED THOSE BUSES WHICH WERE ABLE TO PROCEED.  
ACCESS PROBLEMS TO BERLIN FURTHER DRAMATIZED CDU-SPONSORED  
RALLY EVENING OF AUGUST 13 IN BERLIN. CDU-ORGANIZED  
DEMONSTRATION AND RALLY WAS COVERED EXTENSIVELY IN  
ALL BERLIN PAPERS PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF INTEREST  
CREATED BY THE BUS STOPPAGE.

1.ON AUGUST 12 REPRESENTATIVES OF HE JUNG UNION

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HAD ANNOUNCED THAT 32 BUSES WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE

CDU-SPONSORED " STERNFAHRT" TO BERLIN. AS THE BUSES ASSEMBLED IN HELMSTEDT THE NEXT DAY, ONLY 18 BUSES WERE READY TO MAKE THE TRIP. WARNINGS FROM THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT POSSIBLE TROUBLE FOR " STERNFAHRT" PARTICIPANTS AND THE PROHIBITIVE COST OF DM 1500 FOR CHARTERING EACH BUS TO BERLIN PUT A DAMPER ON THE AMBITIOUS CDU PLANS. BY 1200 ON 13 AUGUST PASSENGERS BEGAN TO ARRIVE AT THE ASSEMBLY PLACE FOR THEIR PILGRIMAGE TO BERLIN. AFTER TWO HOURS OF UNORGANIZED PREPARATION AND ORIENTATION THE FIRST BUS LEFT HELMSTEDT FOR MARIENBORN CHECKPOINT FOLLOWED BY THE OTHER BUSES LEAVING AT ROUGHLY TEN MINUTE INTERVALS. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION FROM THE BUNDESGRENZSCHUTZ, A TOTAL OF 8 BUSES FROM THE ORIGINAL 20 CHARTERED BY THE CDU REACHED BERLIN. TWO " STERNFAHRT" BUSES EVIDENTLY SLIPPED THROUGH HELMSTEDT CHECKPOINT WITHOUT BUNDESGRENZSCHUTZ BEING ABLE TO IDENTIFY THEM. BETWEEN 30 TO 50 PRIVATE CARS PASSED THROUGH MARIENBORN WITH CDU JUNGE UNION MEMBERS, OF WHICH ONLY THREE CARS WERE STOPPED. THEY CONSISTED OF ELEMENTS FROM THE CDU JUNGE UNION, SCHULER UNION AND ARBEITSKREISE FUR FREIHEITLICHE GESSELLSCHAFTSPOLITIK.

2. THE ATMOSPHERE AT CHECKPOINT MARIENBORN WAS SOMEWHAT TENSE. MANY CDU YOUTH EXPECTED TROUBLE AND WERE PREPARED TO BE TURNED BACK. PASSENGERS REPORTED GDR GUARDS HIDING IN DITCHES AROUND THE CHECKPOINT. A PHALANX OF GDR OFFICIALS APPROACHED EACH BUS AS IT ENTERED MARIENBORN. THERE WAS HEAVY QUESTIONING OF BUS DRIVERS, GROUP LEADERS AND PASSENGERS. HOW THE CDU YOUTHS REPLIED TO QUESTIONS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A FACTOR IN WHETHER THEY MADE IT TO BERLIN. BUS DRIVERS WHO DENIED KNOWING ABOUT THE " STERNFAHRT" OR SAID THEY WERE TAKING TOURISTS TO BERLIN WERE ALLOWED TO PROCEED. OTHERS WHO REFUSED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS OR ADMITTED TRANSPORTING CDU YOUTHS TO BERLIN RALLY WERE DENIED ENTRANCE TO TRANSIT ROUTES. GROUP LEADERS WHO SAID THEY WERE TAKING CATHOLIC YOUTH GROUPS TO BERLIN OR TRAVELLING TO BERLIN TO SEE SPORTING EVENTS MOSTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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RECEIVED CLEARANCE. BUS PASSENGERS WERE ASKED WHERE THEY WERE FROM AND WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO DO IN BERLIN. MANY PASSENGERS WERE ALSO ASKED IF THEY WERE MEMBERS OF THE JUNGE UNION AND IF THEY PLANNED TO PARTICIPATE IN BERLIN RALLIES. THOSE DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS WELL BRIEFED TO TELL STORIES HAD NO TROUBLE, THOSE WHO GAVE GDR OFFICIALS STRAIGHT ANSWERS WERE TURNED BACK.

3. PASSENGERS HAD BEEN WARNED NOT TO DISPLAY POLITICAL MATERIAL, BUT MANY KEPT POSTERS ROLLED UP AND LEAFLETS UNDER THEIR SEATS. IN MANY CASES THESE LEAFLETS AND POSTERS WERE CONFISCATED BY BORDER AUTHORITIES. IN ADDITION, GDR OFFICIALS ALSO CONFISCATED LISTS DRAWN UP FOR VISA APPLICATIONS WITH ADDRESSES AND NAMES OF PASSENGERS. EAST GERMAN BORDER GUARDS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE RATHER FREELY ADMITTED TO SOME "STERNFAHRT" PASSENGERS EASE WITH WHICH THEIR BUSES HAD BEEN SINGLED OUT FROM MANY TOURIST BUSES PROCESSING THROUGH MARIENBORN CHECKPOINT AT ABOUT SAME TIME. COMMUNISTS IN WEST GERMANY HAD APPARENTLY RELAYED LICENSE PLATE NUMBERS OF "STERNFAHRT" BUSES ASSEMBLING IN HELMSTEDT.

4. BERLIN PAPERS REPORTED HEAVY SHOW OF FORCE BY GDR POLICE ALONG ENTIRE BERLIN-HELMSTEDT AUTOBAHN. PASSENGERS ON ON BERLIN-BOUND "STERNFAHRT" BUSES REPORTEDLY SAW VOLKSPOLIZEI AT EVERY MAJOR REST STOP ARMED WITH MEGAPHONES, PRESUMABLY TO ORDER ANY BUS WHICH SOUGHT TO STOP TO KEEP ON MOVING. GDR POLICE WERE ALSO REPORTED TO BE STATIONED AT EXIT RAMPS.

5. GDR TAMPERING WITH BERLIN ACCESS ROUTES ON VERY DAY THEY HAD CONSTRUCTED BERLIN WALL 15 YEARS AGO ANGERED BERLINERS AND ADDED SOMEWHAT DRAMATIC NOTE TO EVENING'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. RALLY OF SIX TO EIGHT THOUSAND AT BASE OF ILLUMINATED REICHSTAG BUILDING REACHED HIGHER EMOTIONAL PLANE THAN IT WOULD HAVE HAD THE BUSES NOT BEEN STOPPED.

6. COMMENT. FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY FORCES OF GERMAN CONSERVATISM AND COMMUNISM HAVE CLASHED, THIS TIME UNDER PEACEFUL CONTROLLED CONDITIONS. WE SUSPECT BOTH CDU AND SED EACH FEEL THEY CAME AWAY WITH VICTORY.  
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SPD, ON OTHER HAND, PROBABLY LOST SOME SMALL MEASURE OF ESTEEM AMONG GERMAN VOTERS FOR ITS INABILITY TO ASSURE TRANSIT TO BERLIN AS WELL AS ITS INDECISION ABOUT HOW TO TREAT FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF WALL. END COMMENT.

7. THE ACCOUNT GIVEN ABOVE WAS ASSEMBLED FOR A COMBINATION OF PRESS AND TV ACCOUNTS AND FROM OFFICIAL REPORTS BY BERLIN POLICE AND BUNDESGRENZSCHUTZ.  
GEORGE

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